

Tuberculosis of Poultry

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Tuberculosis is a chronic, highly infectious disease of domestic and wild fowl. Pigs, rats and mice readily contract avian tuberculosis, but man is rarely affected by it.

CAUSE

The disease is caused by a specific germ known as *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis Avium*. It is usually introduced into a clean flock by the purchase of affected birds, or by infected wild birds, the healthy birds contracting the disease through contaminated soil, droppings, feed and utensils.

Pigs and poultry should never be allowed in the same runs or buildings, as both are highly susceptible to tuberculosis, and either can give the disease to the other.

SYMPTOMS

Although birds may become infected at any age, the disease does not usually appear in birds under one year of age, probably due to the slow progress of the disease in its early stages. First symptoms of the disease are listlessness, pale combs and loss of weight in the affected birds, and during the final stages, lameness and swelling of the joints, often accompanied by diarrhoea, the droppings being of a yellowish or greenish nature. Death occurs at intervals in an infected flock.

POST-MORTEM APPEARANCE

The disease usually attacks the liver, spleen and intestines, although other organs may be affected. The affected parts show irregular nodules of varying size, these being of a greyish-white or yellowish nature, which appear to be gritty when cut. (See illustration.)

TREATMENT

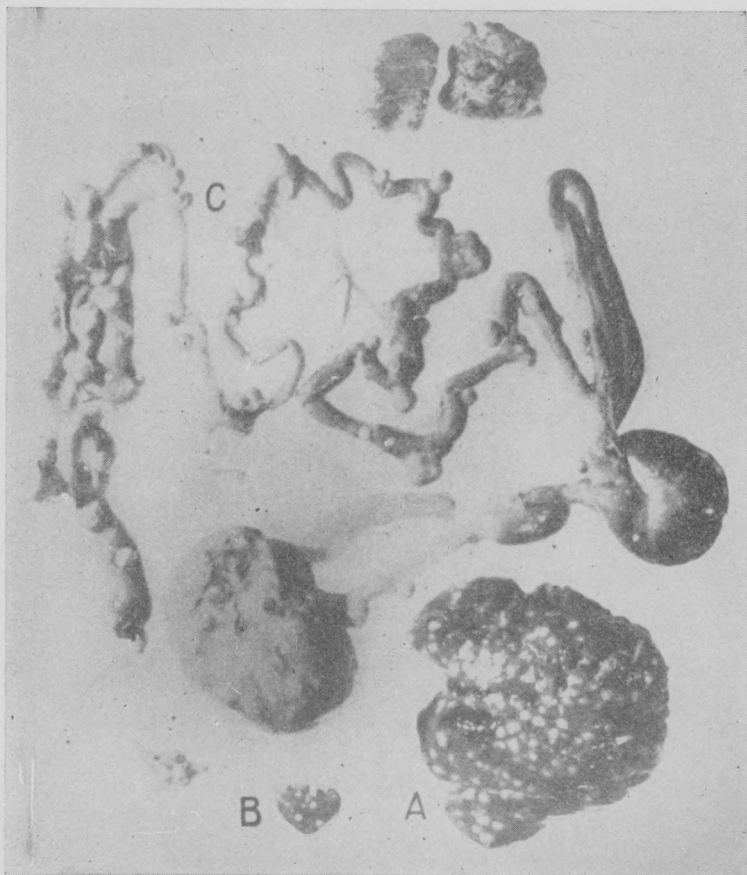
There is no known cure for tuberculosis. All birds suspected of having the disease, should be killed and the internal organs carefully examined. Any showing even the slightest signs of tuberculosis, should be burned. They should never be used for human consumption, nor should they be left where pigs or mice can feed on the carcasses.

CONTROL

Control can best be affected by disposing of the entire flock not later than the first of June. The house should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and be left with the windows out for two or three months, to allow air and sunlight into the house as much as possible. Lime the ground around the house well and cultivate lightly every two or three weeks.

When pullets are placed in the laying house in the fall, they should be confined to the house and care should be taken to see that where tuberculosis has been diagnosed on any premises that pullets and old birds are kept apart.

NOTE.—Burn all infected carcasses.



Viscera of a tuberculous bird. (A) Liver, (B) Spleen, and (C) Intestines.

—Courtesy of Kansas State Agricultural College.